

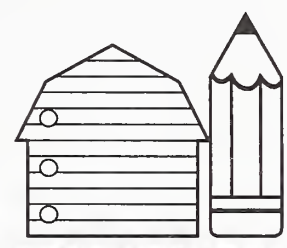
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Ag in the Classroom

Notes

United States
Department of
Agriculture



A bi-monthly newsletter for the Agriculture in the Classroom Program. Sponsored by the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture to help students understand the important role of agriculture in the United States economy. For information, contact the AITC Director, Room 4307, South Bldg., USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250-0991. 202/720-7925.

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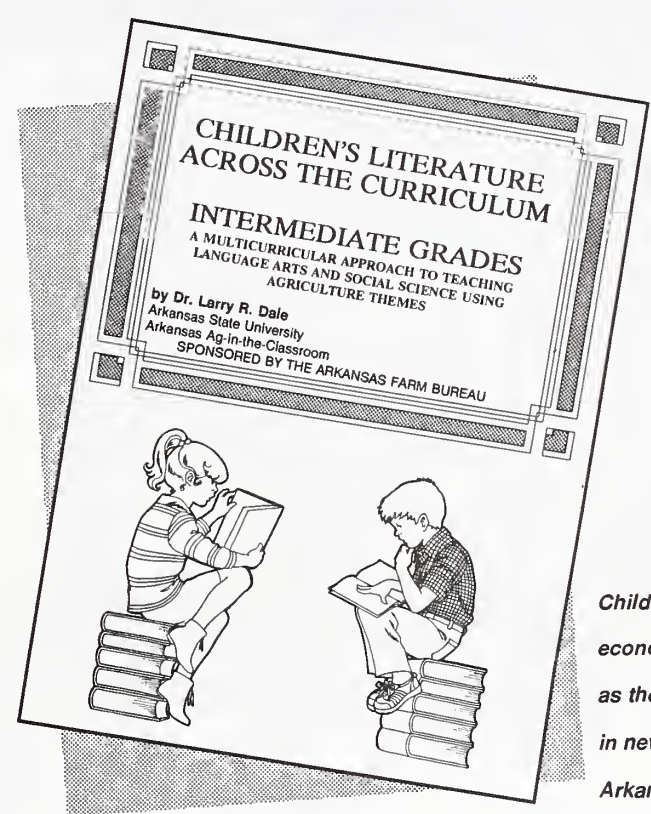
Arkansas Materials Incorporate Award Winning Children's Literature

Children must learn to read before they can read to learn. That's why language arts and reading make up such an enormous part of the elementary school curriculum – and why teachers sometimes say they do not have time to add lessons about agriculture to their curriculum.

Some of the most successful elementary school teachers, however, have developed lessons that integrate agriculture into their language arts curriculum – using award-winning children's literature to open up a variety of ag-related subjects. Children develop agricultural literacy as they acquire literacy skills in these new teaching materials developed by Arkansas Ag in the Classroom program (AITC) and sponsored by the Arkansas Farm Bureau.

The materials are organized for primary (K-2) and intermediate (3-5) grades. They offer suggestions on using classic children's books to learn about agriculture and economics. For example, *Curious George Takes a Job* (H.A. Rey, Houghton Mifflin) can introduce students to the economic concept of scarcity (or, as teachers are to explain to children, the notion that we "cannot have everything we want. . . . We must make choices as we decide which goods or services we will buy"). As children read this book, they explore careers they might like to pursue.

Elementary lessons using Laura Ingalls Wilder's *Little House* books help students learn the difference between farming today and farming in the



Children can learn about
economics and agriculture
as they read classic stories
in new materials from
Arkansas AITC.

late 1800s. Teachers are encouraged to invite a farmer to talk about modern farm operations. Children also learn that now, as in the past, farmers raise cash crops – those grown primarily for income or profit.

In the intermediate grades, lessons incorporate such classics as the Newberry Award winners *A Gathering of Days* (Joan W. Blos, Alladin Books), *Dear Mr. Henshaw* (Beverly Cleary, Morrow Press), and Newberry Medal winner *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* (Mildred D. Taylor, Puffin Books).

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From the Director:

As we planned this issue of *Notes*, we noticed that it had become a technology issue as well as a change-in-technology issue. We are proud to be able to alert you to new educational resources that allow you to use the latest in technology, whether that be through the Internet, a new videotape, or accessing one of the oldest (and still best) technologies – the printed word – by sharing a new book with you. We realize that our audience is at various states of technological use, access, and comfort. We will continue to alert you to a variety of resources available to accommodate your comfort level and your budget.

The next issue of *Notes* will focus on the New England states. Having our July Conference in New England has given us the opportunity to spotlight these programs and their unique approach to agricultural literacy.

We're looking forward to seeing you in New England on July 9-12, 1997, for the 15th annual National Ag in the Classroom Conference.

Elizabeth A. Wolanyk

Elizabeth A. Wolanyk

Texas Project TEACH Available Online

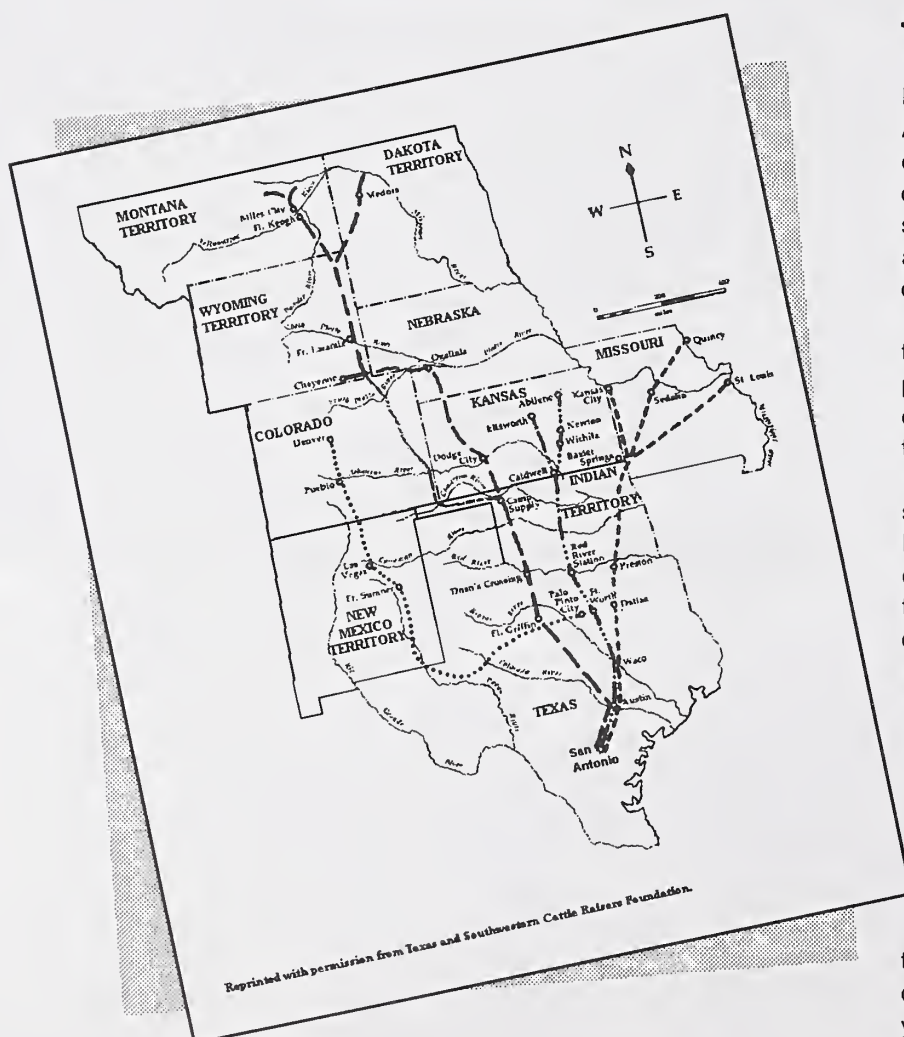
Project TEACH, the Texas Department of Agriculture's agricultural literacy and nutrition curriculum, is now available online. While the curriculum was designed especially for Texas students, it includes many lessons about nutrition and agriculture that would be of interest to students across the country.

Project TEACH (Texas Education and Agriculture Cooperating for Health) was originally published in 1992. Lessons were revised and the curriculum has been expanded for distribution on the Internet.

One of the lessons that would enrich the social studies curriculum in any state is the lesson on Beef and History. Students learn about the history of cattle production from the 1800s to modern times. They can trace the routes of the cattle trails on a map teachers can download along with the lesson plan. They learn vocabulary words related to cattle – from *rail hub* to *vaquero*.

Other lessons focus on the Food Guide Pyramid. Nutrition information includes a lesson on serving size. Because the Food Guide Pyramid suggests the number of servings from each food group, learning to calculate the number of servings is essential for good nutrition. Project TEACH includes many easy-to-remember guidelines: the circumference of a quarter is close to 2 ounces of dry spaghetti, which yields about 1 cup of cooked pasta or 2 servings from the Bread, Cereal, Rice & Pasta group; a

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Spotlight

Team Nutrition Days Links Nutrition, Agriculture

The week of May 5-9 has been designated Team Nutrition Days, a time to emphasize the link between agriculture, nutrition, and health. The 7,000 Team Nutrition schools across the country will be encouraged to plan activities around the theme "Get Growing – From the Ground Up."

This exciting partnership will encourage schools to participate in agricultural activities as part of their school lunch program. For example, some schools may want to plant a school garden so children can learn where their food comes from. Others may want to sponsor a food festival that demonstrates the link between agriculture, nutrition, and health.

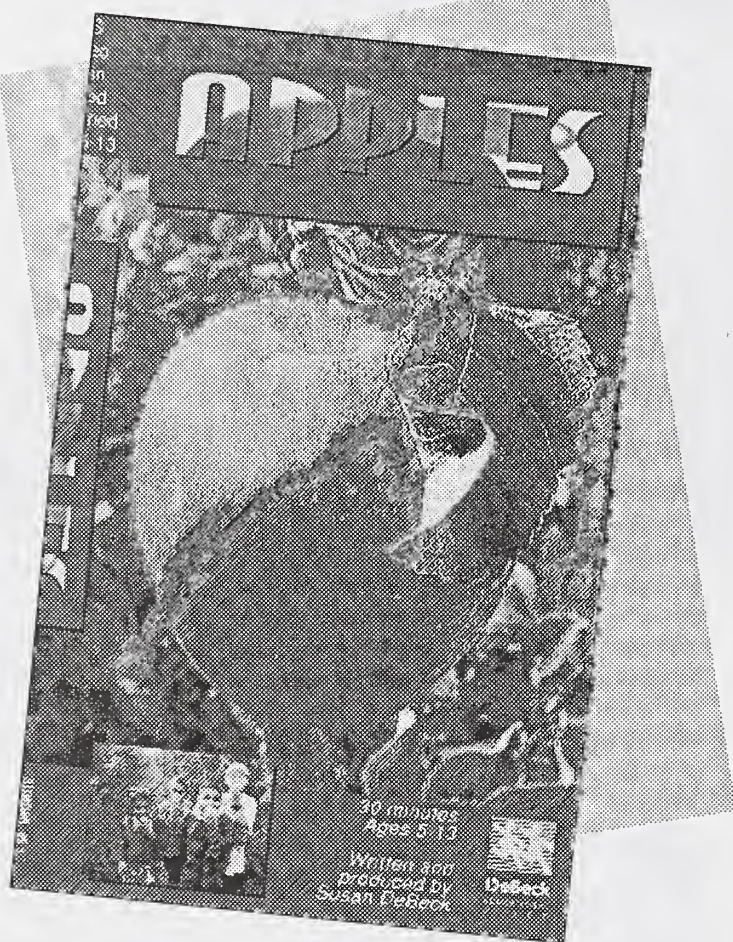
Communities will be encouraged to play a part in Team Nutrition Days. Local farmers' markets and local agricultural producers will play a significant role in the activities developed by many local schools and districts.

A "How To" kit of materials will be mailed to all Team Nutrition schools in March. The booklet will include suggestions on agricultural activities that may be a part of this special week. Each school will be encouraged to plan local activities that will encourage children to try new foods and to understand and appreciate the process that has brought food from the farm to their table.

Team Nutrition is a nationwide program developed to help schools improve the health and nutrition of children by creating innovative public and private partnerships that promote food choices for a healthful diet. Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman says, "USDA's Team Nutrition supports our commitment to improve the nutritional health of America's children."

For more information on Team Nutrition, write Team Nutrition, 3101 Park Center Drive, Room 802, Alexandria, VA 22302 or e-mail to <http://www.usda.gov/fcs/team.htm>.





Apples introduces young viewers to the history and science of growing one of their favorite fruits.

Win Flowering Bulbs for Your School

Schools interested in using flower bulbs to enrich children's learning while beautifying their grounds are encouraged to apply for the "Kids Growing With Dutch Bulbs" award this spring. The Mailorder Gardening Association will award 40,000 bulbs to 200 schools throughout the nation. For a copy of the award application, which was also included in the January 1997 issue of *Growing Ideas: A Journal of Garden-Based Learning*, send a request to National Gardening Association, Dept. MP, 180 Flynn Avenue, Burlington, VT 05401; 1-800-538-7476. Requests may also be e-mailed to nga@garden.org. The deadline for completed applications is May 1st.

Take a Bite Out of the Apple With New Video

There really was a Granny Smith, and she is responsible for the apples that bear her name. She threw out some rotting crab apples on a creek bank near her orchard. From these grew a tree producing the fine Granny Smith apple.

This is just one of the interesting stories that children will learn in *Apples*, a 30-minute video written and produced by Susan DeBeck. With its accompanying booklet of suggested activities, *Apples* is appropriate for children ages 5 through 13.

The video traces the process of apple production throughout the year. From the spring, when bees are brought to the orchard to pollinate the blossoms, to the winter, when trees are pruned, there's always something to do in an apple orchard.

The video highlights the history of apples from Johnny Appleseed and John McIntosh to William Tell and Granny Smith. They learn that many of their favorite apples originally developed from *chance seedlings* – seedlings grown from seeds that have crossed with another apple by natural, not scientific, methods. McIntosh, Red Delicious, Golden Delicious, and Granny Smith apples were all cultivated from chance seedlings.

The video also shows viewers the science involved in growing apples. They learn two methods for propagating apple trees: growing seedlings from seeds and grafting or budding. They look through an electron microscope to see the cells of an apple.

Apples also takes viewers back in time as they learn how the pioneers used apples for everything from apple pies to green dye. Later, students complete a chart in which they compare and contrast the uses of apples today and in pioneer times.

In the math activities that accompany the video, classes are encouraged to hold an apple tasting. After children sample several varieties of apples, they can create a graph to show their favorites. They are also encouraged to count the seeds from a number of apples and then find the average number of seeds in each.

An accompanying bibliography suggests both fiction and nonfiction books that can be used to extend the learning activities. *Apples* is available for \$35 plus \$3 shipping and handling from DeBeck Educational Video, 3783 Airport Way Box, P.O. Box 9754, Bellingham, WA 98227.

Video Teaches About *Ridin'*, *Ropin'* & *Wranglin'*

Many children grow up imagining what it would be like to be a cowboy. A new video developed by the University of California Cooperative Extension Service teaches young viewers in grades 4 through 8 all about cowboys and cattle.

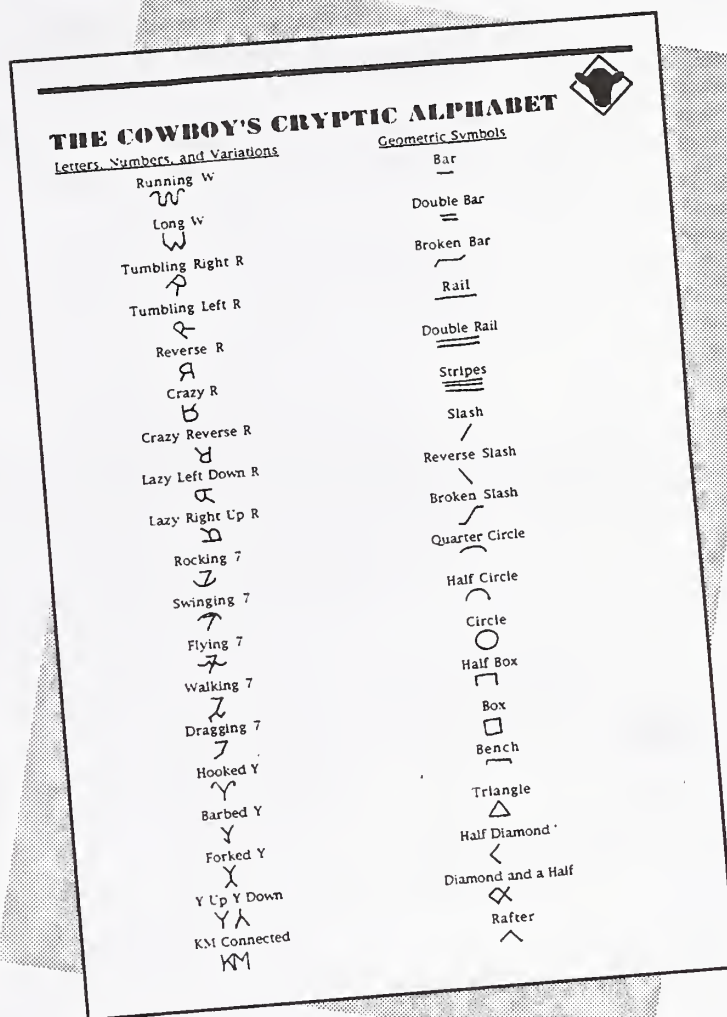
Ridin', Ropin' and Wranglin' is a 20-minute video that dispels many of the myths about the life of a modern-day cowboy. Six accompanying lessons teach students about math, language arts, stewardship, and the importance of the beef cattle industry to their everyday life.

"Cowboy Vernacular," one of the six lessons that builds on material introduced in the video, helps students understand the language of modern cowboys. Although there are distinct regional differences in the language used throughout the West, many cowboy words were originally adapted from the Spanish.

Another activity teaches children how to read the "cryptic alphabet" used in branding and challenges children to create their own brand. Young viewers learn that cattlemen have branding their cattle for over a hundred years, but the American cowboy didn't invent the practice. Egyptian tomb paintings from 4,000 years ago depict people branding fat, spotted cattle.

The video also introduces viewers to the many ways cattle are important to their everyday life. From Gummy Bears to steel ball bearings and from bone china to gel coatings on medicine, beef byproducts are an important component of many of the products they use every day.

The video will be featured at the national Ag in the Classroom conference in July. Orders for *Ridin', Ropin' & Wranglin'* should be sent to Valerie Coe, 4-H Youth Development Advisor, UC Cooperative Extension, 202 W. 4th Street, Alturas, CA 96101. Individual copies are \$30 plus \$3.50 shipping and handling.



Young viewers learn the "cryptic alphabet" used in branding in a new video.

INTERNET

Ag on the Internet: National Pork Producers Council

The National Pork Producers Council's World Wide Web site is billed as "the place for pork lovers, pork producers, and anyone who wants to learn more about pigs and pork." Teachers, students, and parents will all find interesting information and activities on the web site.

"Food Fun for Kids" includes lesson plans and classroom activities covering a variety of food and nutrition topics and other important subjects, including math, reading, and social studies. The teaching activities incorporate hands-on activities,

sequential learning, and cooperative learning. Designed for students in grades 4-6, most can be adapted for younger or older students.

For example, "Fun Family Meals" incorporates two 30-minute lessons that help students learn to classify foods according to the USDA Food Guide Pyramid. In the first lesson, children create a menu that represents a well-balanced meal. A second lesson asks students to create a shopping list for their meal. They can even download the shopping list right off the Internet.

Welcome to Our Farm, reviewed on page 7, is also available at the Web site. Check out the site at <http://www.nppc.org>.

Texas Project from page 2

serving of meat, fish, or poultry the size and thickness of the palm of an average woman's hand equals 1 serving (3 ounces) from the Meat, Poultry & Fish group.

The lessons can be incorporated into subjects such as health, mathematics, science, social studies, language arts, and fine arts. Some of the lessons are available in both English and Spanish. Additional lessons on Texas natural fibers and leather are currently under development.

The web site includes both a version with graphics and a text-only version to accommodate schools without the technology to read graphic files. Access the site at <http://www.agr.state.tx.us>. To reach the lesson on beef and history, select the graphics version of the lessons. Then click on the Meat, Poultry, Fish, Beans & Nuts section of the Food Guide Pyramid. Click on Beef, then Beef and History. Or go directly to <http://www.agr.state.tx.us/teach/beef.htm#hist>. The maps can be accessed at the end of the lesson plan.



THE GREAT TRAIL DRIVES

Texas Longhorns were rounded up by cowboys and driven north to provide meat and to start ranches on the Northern Plains. Some of the famous cattle trails were the Shawnee, Chisholm, Western and the Goodnight-Loving.

Find and color the Shawnee Trail green, the Chisholm red, the Western purple and the Goodnight-Loving blue.

THE GOODNIGHT-LOVING TRAIL

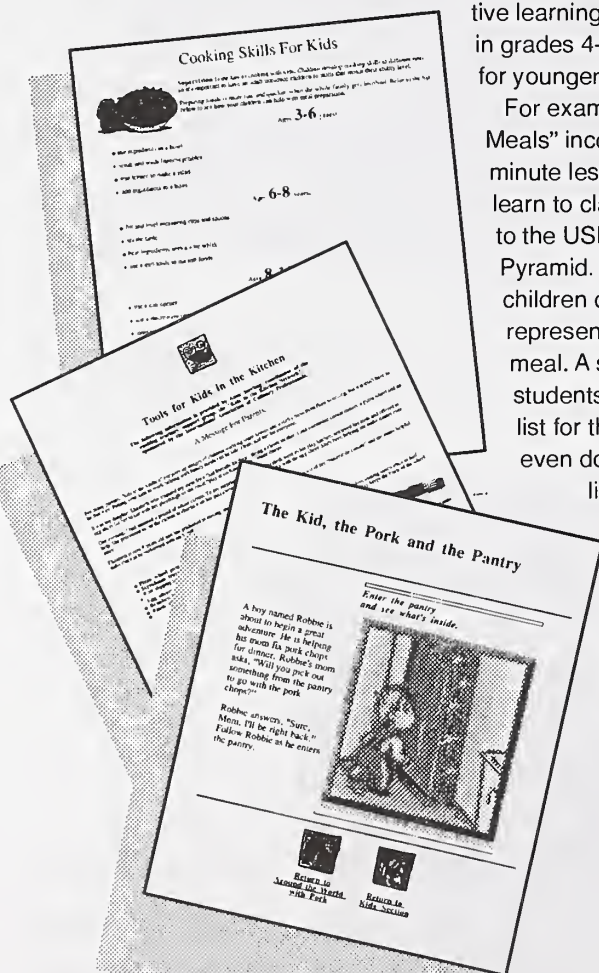
THE WESTERN TRAIL ———
(Used after 1885)

THE CHISHOLM TRAIL ———

THE SHAWNEE TRAIL ———

Reprinted with permission from Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association

Students trace the routes of the cattle drives in Texas's Project TEACH, now available on the Internet.





Preschoolers Learn About Pigs in New Book

All many urban children know about pigs is what they learned in "The Three Little Pigs" fairy tale. A new book by the National Pork Producers Council will help preschool and primary grades teachers give students a better awareness of how pigs are raised.

Welcome to Our Farm provides a realistic and interesting introduction to the process of raising pigs. Sixteen full-color photographs with accompanying text introduce children to Bethany and Michael, two children who live on a farm in Iowa.

Children not only learn what farmers feed pigs – corn, soybeans, wheat, and grain sorghum – but see what some of these crops look like in the field. Readers learn that because pigs can't sweat, farmers need to use fans or water sprinklers to keep their animals cool. They see pictures of a litter of piglets. The text even encourages they to see if they can make a noise like a pig – an activity sure to delight preschoolers.

An accompanying lesson plan suggests that teachers use the book to teach children a variety of new vocabulary words: farm, farm, crop, pig, piglet, snout, and litter. A student activity sheet includes a variety of language arts, math, and reasoning activities, all using the theme of pigs. The teacher's guide offers some suggestions of how teachers can explain what happens to pigs when they go to market, and concludes with a brief list of some of the byproducts of pigs.

Welcome to Our Farm is available from the National Pork Producers Council, P.O. Box 10383, Des Moines, IA 50306; 515-223-2600. The e-mail address is pork@nppc.org. The book is available online at <http://www.nppc.org/forkids/farmtastic.html>.

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All of the lessons are keyed to important agricultural and economics concepts. So while students are learning basic language arts skills – writing business letters, using adjectives, proofreading – they are also learning about the market economy and developing an understanding of how the application of science and technology has greatly increased the productive capacity of the agricultural system.

Arkansas AITC has conducted a series of workshops for elementary school teachers to introduce them to the materials. One teacher praised the new teaching aids by noting, "The materials were organized with the busy teacher in mind. It allows us to use them with the most minimal amount of hunting and looking." Another commented, "I can see how this program will help students to be better readers as they become acquainted with economics."

Dr. Larry Dale, state contact for AITC in Arkansas, developed the materials. They are available from the Center for Economic Education, P.O. Box 2890, State University, Arkansas, 72467; 501-972-3810.



Children learn about farming and pigs in Welcome to Our Farm, also available online.

Ag in the Classroom---State Contacts

The individuals listed here are key reference persons in each state. If you have any questions, want to make reports, or need more information about your state's Ag in the Classroom program, contact the following:

Alabama

Ms. Jane Alice Lee
2101 Bell Road
Montgomery, AL 36117
334-240-7124

Ms. Brenda Summerlin
Dept of Ag & Industries
P.O. Box 3336
Montgomery, AL 36193
334-240-7124

Alaska

Mr. Ted Berry
Alaska AITC
P.O. Box 62
Willow, AK 99688-0062
907-495-1018

Mike Carlson

Box 953
Delta Junction, AK 99737
907-895-4819 (H)

Arizona

Arizona Farm Bureau
3401 East Elwood Street
Phoenix, AZ 85040-1625
602-470-0088

Monica Pastor
Chair, Arizona AITC Task Force
4001 E. Broadway #B-9
Phoenix, AZ 85040
602-437-1330

Arkansas

Dr. Larry R. Dale
ASU Center for Economic
Education
P.O. Box 2890
State Univ., AR 72467-2890
501-972-3810

California

Mr. Mark Linder
CA Foundation for AITC
1601 Exposition Blvd FB 16,
Sacramento, CA 95815
916-924-4380

Colorado

Ms. Helen Davis
Colorado Dept of Agriculture
700 Kipling St. #4000
Lakewood, CO 80215-5894
303-239-4114

Ms. Bette Blinde
Colorado Foundation for Agriculture
28276 WCR 15
Windsor, CO 80550
970-686-7806

Connecticut

Bernadette Kayan
510 Pidgeon Hill Rd.
Windsor, CT 06095
203-683-1922

Dr. Alfred Mannebach
University of Connecticut
249 Glenbrook Rd
Storrs, CT 06269-2093
203-486-0246

Delaware

Ms. Anne T. Fitzgerald
Delaware AITC
Delaware Dept. of Ag.
2320 S. DuPont Highway
Dover, DE 19901
302-739-4811 Ext. 273

District of Columbia

Ms. Barbara Evans
UDC/CES (Room 309)
901 Newton St., N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20017
(202) 274-6936
(202) 274-6903

Florida

Ms. Doty Wenzel
545 E. Tennessee
Room 206 Black Building
Tallahassee, FL 32308
904-487-4973

Georgia

Ms. Donna Reynolds
Georgia Farm Bureau
P.O. Box 7068
Macon, GA 31298
912-474-8411

Hawaii

Mr. Michael Barros
2530 10th Avenue
Bldg. A, Room 23
Honolulu, HI 96816
808-733-9125

Idaho

Mr. Rick Waitley, Director
Waitley Associates
1741 Gibson Way
Meridian, ID 83642
208-896-0988

Illinois

Illinois Farm Bureau
Field Services Division
1701 Towanda Ave
Bloomington, IL 61702-2901
309-557-3334

Indiana

Ms. Pam Bright
Office of Commission
150 West Market, Suite 414
Indianapolis, IN 46024
317-232-8769

Mr. Harry L. Pearson

Indiana Farm Bureau
P.O. Box 1290
Indianapolis, IN 46206
317-692-7851

Iowa

Ms. Barbara Lykins
Iowa Farm Bureau Federation
5400 University Avenue
West Des Moines, IA 50266-5997
515-225-5425

Kansas

Ms. Sandra Kramer
124 Bluemont Hall
Kansas State University
Manhattan, KS 66506
913-738-7946

Kentucky

Ms. Faye Lowe
Kentucky Farm Bureau
9201 Bunsen Pkwy
Louisville, KY 40250-0700
502-455-5000

Ms. Rayetta Boone
Department of Agriculture
500 Mero St., 7th Floor
Frankfort, KY 40602
502-464-4696

Louisiana

Ms. Barbara Langley
LA Farm Bureau Federation
P.O. Box 95004
Baton Rouge, LA 70895-9004
504-922-6200

Mrs. Lynda Danos

2144 Highway 1
Raceland, LA 70394
504-448-2395

Maine

Neil Piper
Maine Ag in the Classroom
26 Rice Street
Presque Isle, ME 04769
207-784-0193

Maryland

Steven A. Connelly
Maryland Agricultural Education
Foundation, Inc.
2101 East Fort Avenue - Suite 124
Baltimore, MD 21230
410-752-0671
410-783-0857 FAX

Massachusetts

Deborah C. Hogan
c/o P.O. Box 1171
Lakeville, MA 02347
508-336-4426

Michigan

Dr. Eddie Moore
410 Agriculture Hall
Michigan State University
East Lansing, MI 48824
517-355-6580

Ms. Julie Chamberlain

Michigan Farm Bureau
7373 W Saginaw Hwy
Lansing, MI 48909
517-323-7000

Minnesota

Mr. Alan Withers
MN Department of Agriculture
90 W Plato Blvd
St Paul, MN 55107
612-296-6688

Mississippi

Mississippi Ag in the Classroom
MS Farm Bureau
P.O. Box 1972
Jackson, MS 39215-1972
601-977-4824

Missouri

Ms. Diane Olson
Missouri Farm Bureau
P.O. Box 658
Jefferson City, MO 65102
573-893-1400

Montana

Marge Thompson
Agriculture in Montana Schools
Rural Route
Wolf Creek, MT 59648
406-562-3562

Nebraska

Ms. Ellen Hellerich
NE Farm Bureau Federation
PO Box 80299
Lincoln, NE 68501
402-421-4400 ext 2002

Nevada

Ben Damonte
1300 Manetta Way
Sparks, NV 89431
702-853-6464

Dorothy Hammond

Hot Springs Ranch
Star Rt.
Golconda, NV 89414
702-529-0440
Ben Damonte Co-contact

New Hampshire

Ms. Lynne Blye
Dept. of Agriculture
Callor Box 2042
Concord, NH 03302
603-271-3696

New Jersey

Ms. Joni Elliot
NJ Dept. of Agriculture
CN530
Trenton, NJ 08625
609-292-8897 or 633-7463

New Mexico

Ms. Jennifer Hopper
NM Farm & Livestock Bureau
421 N. Water
Las Cruces, NM 88001
505-526-5521

New York

Andrew Fagan
New York AITC
408 Kennedy Hall
Cornell University
Ithaca, NY 14853-5901
607-255-8122

North Carolina

Ms. Janice Shepard
NC Farm Bureau
PO Box 27766
Raleigh, NC 27611
919-782-1705

North Dakota

Ms. Sarah Nordby
ND Dept. of Agriculture
HC 1, Box 9
Amidon, ND 58620
701-224-4757

Ohio

Ms. Judy Roush
Ohio Ag Awareness Council
PO Box 479
Columbus, OH 43216-0479
614-249-2429

Oklahoma

Ms. Kay Walker
OK State Dept. of Ed.
Ag in the Classroom Coord.
2500 N. Lincoln (Room 315)
Oklahoma City, OK 73103-4599
405-522-0638

Ms. Jo Theimer

Oklahoma Dept. of Agriculture
2800 No. Lincoln Bldg.
Oklahoma City, OK 73105-4298
405-521-3864
FAX 405-521-4912

Oregon

Ms. Dona Coon
Oregon Ag in the Classroom
1200 NW Front Ave., (Suite 520)
Portland, OR 97209-2800
541-783-7063

Pennsylvania

Ms. Pat Sueck
534 Kennett Road
Arrville, PA 17302
717-862-3486

Rhode Island

Ms. Carol Stamp
1 Stamp Place
South County Trail
Exeter, RI 02822
401-783-7704

South Carolina

Robbie Myers
SC Ag in the Classroom
4913 College Lake Drive
Florence, SC 29506
803-665-1361 (H)
803-796-6700 (W)

South Dakota

Ms. Melanie Schumacher
SD Ag in the Classroom
P.O. Box 577
Pierre, SD 57501
605-945-2306

Tennessee

Charles Curtis
Tennessee Farm Bureau
P.O. Box 313
Columbia, TN 38402-0313
615-388-7872

Texas

Mr. Tad Duncan
Texas Farm Bureau
PO Box 2689
Waco, TX 76702-2689
817-772-3030

Utah

Ms. Debra Spielmaker
UT State University
UMC 2315
Logan, UT 84322-2315
801-797-1657

Vermont

Ms. Megan Camp
Shelburne Farms
Shelburne, VT 05482
802-985-8686

Gus Johnson

Vermont Farm Bureau
RR 2 Box 123
Richmond, VT 05477
802-434-5646

Virginia

Ms. Michele Awad
VA Farm Bureau Federation
PO Box 27552
Richmond, VA 23261
804-784-1234

Washington

Shan Schneibly
P.O. Box 786
Ellensburg, WA 98926
509-962-4134

Mr. Doug Hasslen

P.O. Box 4256
Olympia, WA 98504-2560
206-902-1940

West Virginia

Mr. William Aiken
WV Farm Bureau
1 Red Rock Road
Buckhannon, WV 26201
304-472-0800

Wisconsin

Mr. Bob Legee
Wisconsin Farm Bureau
7010 Mineral Point Rd
Madison, WI 53705
608-836-5575

Wyoming

Ms. Lori Gross
2219 Carey Ave.
Cheyenne, WY 82002
307-322-5727

Ms. Elaine Moore

Wyoming Ag in the Classroom
2407 Highland Court
Douglas, WY 82633
307-358-6232

Canada

Jean Middleton
Ontario Agri-Food Education
110 Tamarac Trail
Aurora, Ontario L4G 5T1
905-841-7594

Guam

Resident Instruction Coordinator
College of Ag & Life Sciences
University of Guam
Mangiala, Guam 96923
671-735-2009
Fax 671-734-5842

Micronesia

Dr. Ruben Dayrit
CTAS/College of Micronesia
Kolonia, Ponape
FSM 96941
691-320-2738

Puerto Rico

Mr. Dave Heilig
USDA/SCS
Caribbean Area State Office
GPO Box 4868
San Juan, PR 00936
809-498-5206

Virgin Islands

Mr. Eric Bough
Dept. of Economic Development
& Agriculture
St Croix, VI 00850
809-778-0991

Mr. Otis Hicks

PO Box 804
Christianstad
St. Croix, VI 00821-0804
809-773-0758

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Room 4307, South Bldg.
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Washington, D.C. 20250-0991

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